

\$2.00 USA • \$2.50 CANADA • £1 UK

CEREBUS JAKA'S STORY



120
MAR

NOTE • FROM • THE PRESIDENT

I just finished over seventeen hours of interviewing for a Comics Journal interview that should be coming out this summer. For that reason, as well as strict adherence to an achtung-three-week-maximum-allowed-drawing-time for each issue so we can get caught up on our cover dates, this Note is going to be a little shorter this time and for the next few times. I will just have to be . . . a word that means interesting but not interesting . . . enough to . . . a phrase that means 'to make you not notice' but not as plain-sounding as 'to make you not notice.' I'll probably rely on a lot more gimmicks like . . . what I'm doing here with writing down in-between thoughts that you get when you're writing before the writing starts to come out. I'll try to do . . . or not do; not do it . . . too much. Maybe just a paragraph or so.

Oh wait! I know. Magic really exists. I mean the horsey ride in Jaka's story. Yeah! That's a for real playground (albeit with the background suburbs eliminated, as well as most of the rest of the playground equipment that's there). Can you believe it? I've been meaning to mention that since 114. Jeez. That's good for at least a paragraph or two.

Or hundreds of lines.

Like this.

But no. That would be cheating.

Yes. Magic the wonder horsey ride exists between Mill Street and Highland Road right here in Kitchener, just behind the lawn-bowling and tennis club. I decided to walk down there the day I finished Church & State, while Ger still had the last few pages to do. I was free! Free, I tell you! I had a whole gaping novel ahead of me. Most of the Rick/Jaka/Cerebus/Pud part I had already worked out, but I got to pick and choose from all of the incidents in Jaka's past I wanted to work with. I was sitting on the park bench (Oh, hey! Right. I forgot. The park bench exists, too) staring at the horse when I started getting all of these mental pictures of Jaka and what she would be fantasizing while she played on this horse. And. The best way to write a character . . . is . . . you've got to hear them. And. Like they're in your head. And. Suddenly there was Jaka. And. She way only so many years. And. That's Magic. Magic's my horse. And. When I'm playing on Magic I'm playing that it's Pageant. And. I get to go to Pageant. And. I sit right behind my uncle. And. He's Lord Julius.

Well you know how a three year old tells a story. I think I sat there most of the afternoon listening to ages three and four. And. I still left most of it out. The original idea had been to do a Prologue that was all text about Jaka's earliest years. Try as I might to compress her childhood (mentally) into twenty pages of text and single illustrations (which had initially seemed like a lot of pages to fill) it just wasn't going to fit. I tried the first two pages. One tenth of the way through, she was out of bed and having a bath. It did not bode well for that . . . word that means intimidating but on a grander scale . . . climb to age twelve (Ooh! Ooh! Teacher! Pick me! Pick me! Yes? Daunting? *Very good!*)

Whoa. This is almost a full length Note from the President. I'm spoiling you guys.

Later.

★★★★★★★★

The Poet is dedicated to Barry Windsor-Smith for "The Ram & The Peacock" (Gorblimey Press) and P. Craig Russell for "Salomé."

★★★★★★★★

Gerhard is now vice-president of Aardvark Vanaheim and in charge of the day-to-day running of the company. We'd like to welcome Monique Kaptein as Gerhard's Administrative Assistant.

CEREBUS

NO. 120

MARCH 1989

DAVE SIM
President

GERHARD
Vice-President

MONIQUE KAPTEIN
Administrative Assistant

Circulation
26,500

JAKA'S STORY
a novel

PROLOGUE
(Cerebus 114)

POGROM'S PROGRESS
(Cerebus 115 to
Cerebus 119)

THE POET
(Cerebus 120 to
Cerebus 130)

MYSTERY
ACHIEVEMENT
(Cerebus 131 to
Cerebus 136)

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book two
THE POET





MM.
WHAT
ELSE?

I MET THE AUTHOR
OF THAT POISONOUS
VOLUME ABOUT THE
PAINTING THAT
GROWS OLD AND
HIDEOUS

AND I
ASKED
HIM...



I ASKED
HIM HOW HE
VIEWS
HIS CURRENT
POPULARITY ...

IN LIGHT OF HIS
WELL-KNOWN
ASSERTION THAT
'TO BE POPULAR
ONE MUST BE A
MEDIOCRITY!'

WELL!



WITHOUT SO
MUCH AS
BATING
AN EYELASH
HE TURNS
ROUND AND
SAYS ...

✱



'SIR IN THE
MATTER OF
POPULARITY!'

'AS IN MOST
OTHER
MATTERS!'

'I AM THE
EXCEPTION
WHICH PROVES
THE RULE!'



THIS WITICISM SO DELIGHTED
HIM THAT HE LAUGHED UNTIL
HE WAS SEIZED BY A FIT OF
COUGHING SEVERE ENOUGH THAT
IT COULD ONLY BE ALLEVIATED

THROUGH THE
SWIFT ADMINISTRATION
OF A CIGARETTE ...

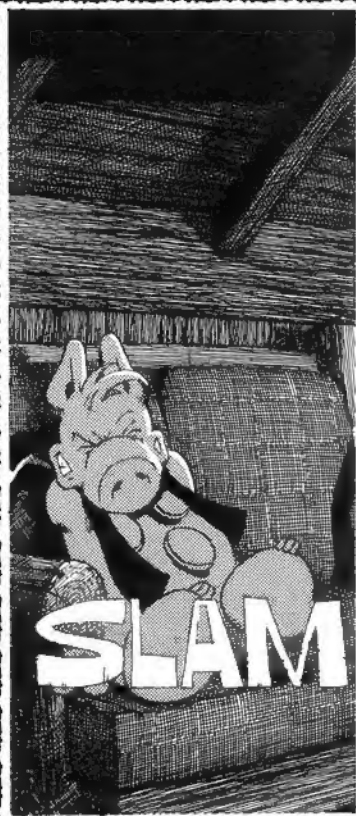


OH!

UM...







SO WHAT
HAPPENED
AFTER HENRY
WOTTON'S COUGHING
FIT...?



ONCE HE HAD RECOVERED
HIMSELF SUFFICIENTLY AND
REALIZED 'I HAD' NO
INTENTION OF BACKING
OUT OF 'THE PRESENCE',
BEARING OFF HIS
TREASURED BON MOT ON
A VELVETEEN PILLOW,
HE GAVE ME ONE OF
HIS 'SUCH-A-SHAME-
YOU-HAVE-TO-BE-
RUNNING-ALONG'
LOOKS

WHAT
DID YOU
DO?



WHAT ANY
GENTLEMAN
WOULD DO.

I
ASSUMED A
POSTURE WHICH
WAS THE VERY
ANTITHESIS OF
'RUNNING ALONG'

AND
LIT A
CIGARETTE

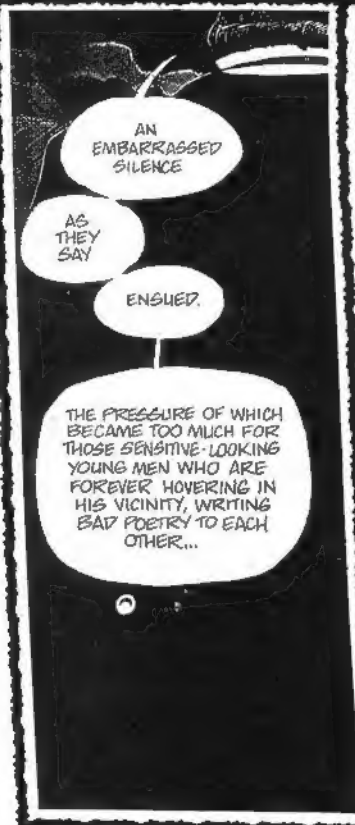


AN
EMBARRASSED
SILENCE

AS
THEY
SAY

ENSUED.

THE PRESSURE OF WHICH
BECAME TOO MUCH FOR
THOSE SENSITIVE-LOOKING
YOUNG MEN WHO ARE
FOREVER HOVERING IN
HIS VICINITY, WRITING
BAD POETRY TO EACH
OTHER...



THEY BEGAN TO ROLL
THEIR EYES THEATRICALY,
SMIRKING AND GESTURING
AND GENERALLY BEHAVING
AS ONE WOULD EXPECT
OF HENRY WOOLTON'S
LOYAL MINIONS...

QUITE QUITE
BADLY...

WOTTON

SO WHAT
DID YOU
DO?

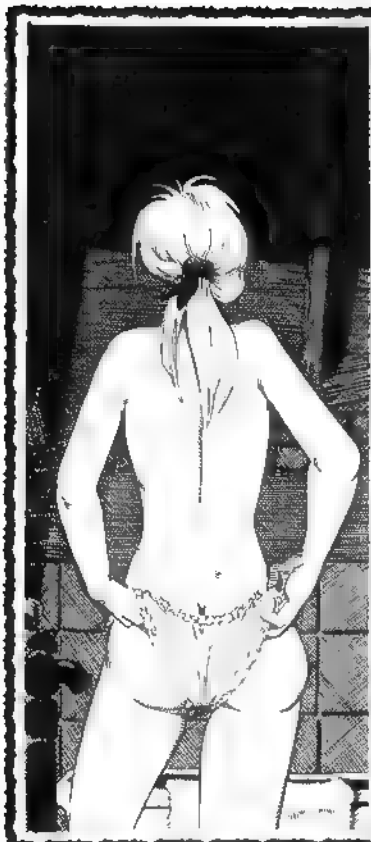


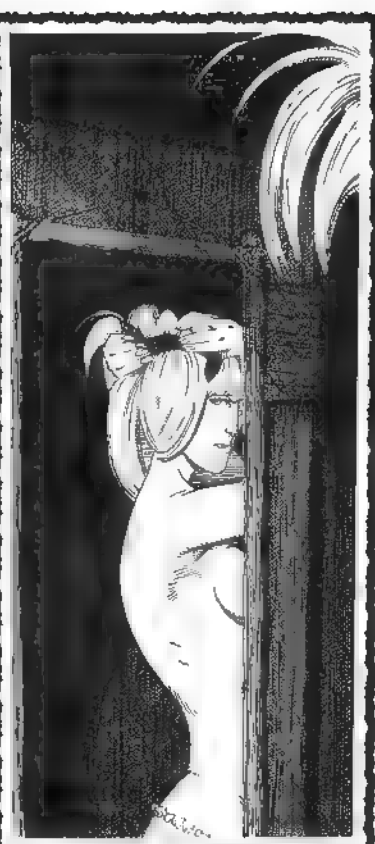
WOTTON.
SORRY.

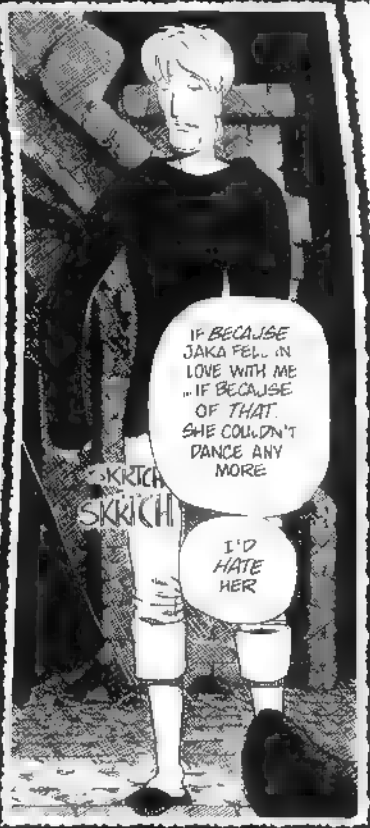
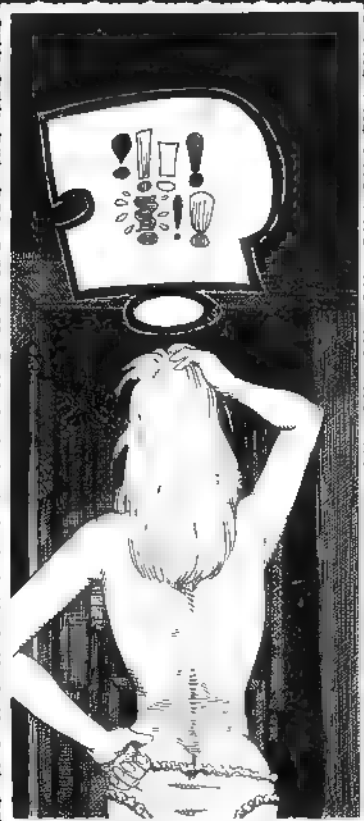
WELL-I REGARDED
THEIR CAPERS FOR
SEVERAL MINUTES
AND THEN, WITH A
GESTURE THAT INCLUDED
MOST PARTICULARLY
THAT INSUFFERABLE
LITTLE 'ROSS' FELLOW,
I SAID...

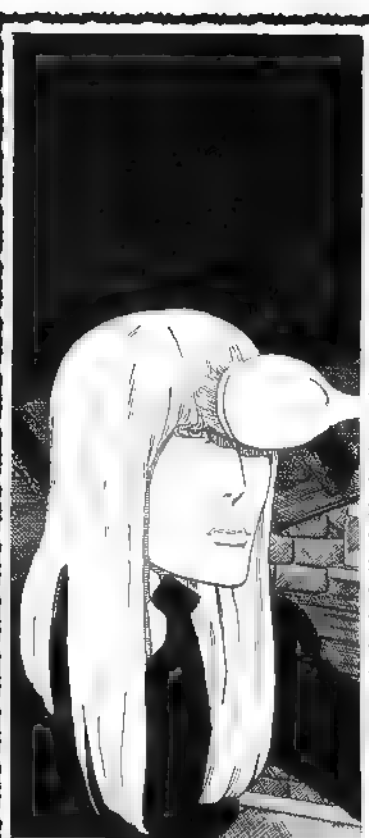












REALLY



OH
YEAH.
I'D HATE
HER
I'D HATE
MYSELF

I'D FEEL AS IF
OUR LOVE HAD
DESTROYED SOME
THING MORE
IMPORTANT
THAN EITHER
OF US...

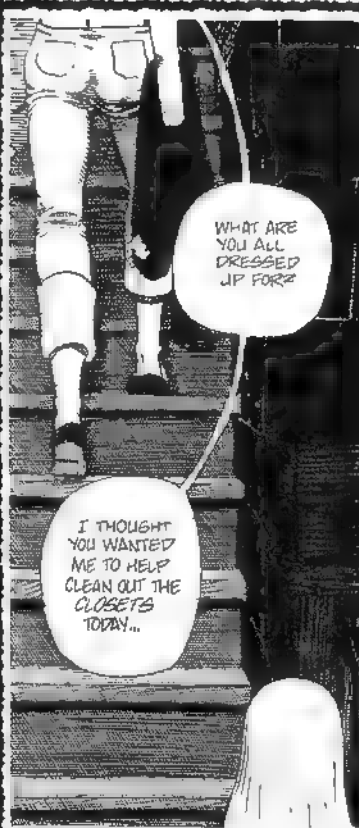


TSK

JUST WHEN
MY INTEREST
IS PIQUED

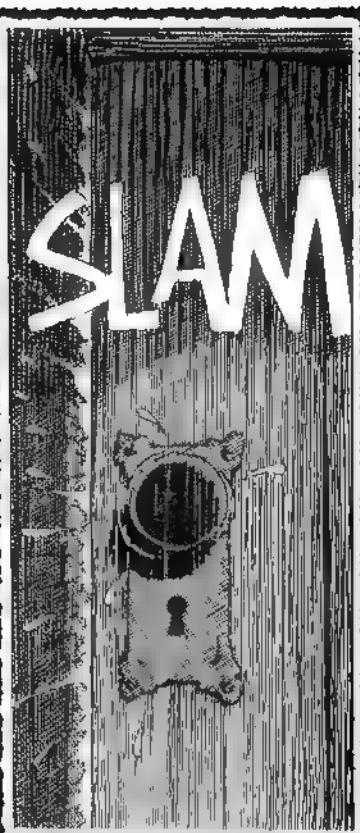












AARDVARK C O M M E N T

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave,

I enjoy Cerebus very much. I intend to keep reading it as long as you keep publishing it.

John Burns
812 Memorial Dr. #606A
Cambridge, MA.,
02139

I can't ask for a fairer deal than that.

★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Ever since my friend Rob Lavender introduced me to Cerebus in 1983 I've been hooked, and by purchasing your super cool fantastic book, I feel I've been supporting your "comfortable" lifestyle. Well, it's payback time. I'm getting married in September, and over the years since my college graduation in 1985 I've lost track of Rob. I want him to be my best man, and only Tarin knows where he is. I do know this though, wherever he is he's reading Cerebus. My hope is he'll see this letter and give me a call. Please print this, and keep up the great work, and I'll help keep you in champagne and caviar.

Thank you,

Bruce A. Riseborough
Box 2762
Vineyard Haven, MA.,
02568

Actually I hate caviar.

★★★★★★★★

Dave Sim,

Hi. It's me. The guy from the Memphis Con. who asked the "When will there be black people in Cerebus?" question. I decided to put my thoughts down on paper and take your advice to "attack (you) in the letters column." Out of our all too short conversation, I agreed with two major points that you made. First of all, I was pleased to hear you say that you would never have a token black in the story. If any-

thing, the character should be as important and integral to the Cerebus novel as Powers, Weissaupt, and Julius are (or were), and not just some black bartender thrown into a couple of panels to show that Dave Sim is an "equal opportunity" artist. Secondly, I agreed with you that Cerebus would not meet anybody black (nor of any other culture) in test, or the surrounding area, since it has been established for quite some time now as being very European in basis. It would be more plausible if Cerebus met different races in a port city or more directly, overseas. You stated that, after "Jaka's Story", you did intend to have Cerebus go overseas, and therefore, it would be possible for you to make not only mine, but your other black, Indians and Oriental fans, wish come true.

One point that I must say I disagreed with, though, is your comment: "If I had a black character in Cerebus, he would have to have a dialect, possibly an Eddie Murphy type." Now, as much respect as I feel for such modern black actors, such as Eddie Murphy, Bill Cosby, and Robert Townsend, I grow weary of seeing blacks portrayed as simply comedians. I think it would add a great deal of maturity to the story (which would reflect on maturity in Cerebus?) if the newly introduced black character were moved away from the straight man/funny guy style which is seen so much of in the book.

Since you did mention that Cerebus would be going across the ocean, I envision a black male captain of a ship. He is very large, about the size of Bear, and instead of a dialect, he is very, very, intelligent and more articulate than most scholars, much less captains of ships. He is a strong, devoted leader of a racially mixed crew which is just as devoted to him. None of the crew is close to him though, because he is always solemn and brooding. Yet, for some reason, he identifies with Cerebus. For instance, upon first meeting each other, the captain would ask, "What are you staring at?"

"Uh . . . Cerebus was just noticing the color of your skin", would be the earth pig's reply.

A pause.

"What are you staring at?" Cerebus would ask.

"Oh, nothing", the captain would answer with the slightest grin, "I was just noticing the colour of your fur."

Anyway, the "how's" and "why's" of this whole scenario I will leave up to you, that is, if you decide to use it. If, however, you decide to trash it and go with a black character of your own, all I ask is that you keep the character honest and real and not a stereotype.

Well, I'm going to sign off now. I feel no need to waste more than this sentence on saying how much I enjoy Cerebus, because if I didn't love the book, I wouldn't have written this letter, now would I? So, let me state, once again, as I did at the convention, how nice it was to meet you. I really don't understand the people that call you an A-hole. Maybe I just caught you on a good day. Oh well, now my list of "Top Five People I Must Someday Meet" has been shortened to just Peter Gabriel, Kate Bush, Anne Rice, and Spike Lee. No offence, but you weren't number one.

"He came to our city
in the early dawn . . ."
Foster Solomon
Chattanooga, TN.

Well, it's been almost a year since I got your letter. The overseas story I mentioned takes place a looong time after Jaka's Story (a looong time). Your sea-captain sounds like my ol' Dark Fantasy pal Charles (don't call me Chuck white boy) Saunders author of the Imaro sword and sorcery series.

When he arrives he won't be a stereotype, but it will be after issue 200 (unless it's between 136 and 150). Hope to see you the next time in Memphis.

★★★★★★★★

Dave,

Shit, it's this girl. Y'know, the one who I'm desperately in love with but who's going out with my best buddy? The one I gave the Mick and Keith issues to for Christmas 'cause she's a Stones fan? The one who I lay awake agonizing over 'cause I want her so bad but I don't wanna betray my friend?

So she and I were sitting in Kentucky Fried Chicken gobbling up a few Chicken Littles and smoking all sophisticated like and going on a massive pseudo-intellectual conversation and she's sliding in these subtle little clues that she wants my throbbing passion rod.

What am I gonna do, Dave? She's cute, funny, intelligent, she likes me and she even likes CEREBUS! I'll

never find another girl so perfect. I need your advice — I'm just a lowly fanboy. And you, as you keep reminding us, are the greatest stud since Captain Kirk with this super-incredible hot Zolastraya babe and all Help me, Dave. Help me

Jay Beauvillia
Box 163, Wittenberg, WI., 54499

Most times when guys hear 'I want your throbbing passion rod' what is actually being said is 'will you be my friend?' If your 'throbbing passion rod' is what she wants, she'll let you know. You won't have to look for clues.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

I have finally figured out why Gerhard wouldn't tell us his last name. If my last name was Gazelle I wouldn't be too proud either. So how does the judge in the Iran/Contra hearings get to ink a funny animal book, and how does Olly North tie into all of this?

Just wondering,

Bill Braun
Sitka, Alaska

P.S. Sorry Dave I couldn't think of a reason to call you a fuck, but I thought you would appreciate me mentioning you anyway

I was a bundle of nerves til I got to your P.S.

Dave,

I have a theory.

In Cerebus' early years, his foster parents suppressed his animal tendency towards the present tense. After much labour and years of struggle (not at all unlike my toilet-training period) this deficiency (and deficiency it was . . . Cerebus' memories of events in the past, even the recent past, were hazy and unsettled. Each experience was either entirely novel, or like some experience in the past. If it was an "old" experience, Cerebus would do the same thing he did before, if it was a new experience, instinct ruled.) was suppressed, only to have a new self-centered tendency emerge. Namely, his constant neglect of the use of the first person. Later in life, this self-centricity (?) would become the major driving force in his constant struggle for power.

Or not.

Somewhat confusedly,
The Left Hand of Dartmouth

I would suspect 'not'.

★★★★★★★★★★

Greetings Dave:

A short note to extend as much encouragement as I can to you and your enterprise. Today I was in a brief, illogical conversation which made me wonder how much longer you can keep "Cerebus" going.

I was in a book and comic store to try to get my "Cerebus" collection up to date only to be greeted by an empty rack. Checking the back issue rack showed nothing since #110. When I asked the clerk if there were any more elsewhere he said no. He added that they must have sold out quickly. I commented that that seemed to be a good reason to increase the order. He said that they had decreased the order because the audience was getting smaller since they weren't selling many. I pointed out that if there had been any in the rack I would have bought one, plus the back issues that I need. This didn't seem to have any effect on him as he said nothing else. With that sort of defeatist, self-propagating pessimism abroad in the world it would seem that the little guy, you, is in big trouble.

Dave, are you still offering subscriptions?

Anxiously,
Vic Wolczuk
Box 33 Grp. 615 S.S. 6
Winnipeg, MB.
R2C 2Z3

C'mon. There's lots of shops who just love us in Winnipeg. Aren't there?

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave

(The Beloved Entertainer as Elvis Costello)

Mark Peterson (in issue 116) ask if there's an official Cerebus-fan-look-alike, I try to help him (and you for future merchandising studies) with these wonderful shoots of me (guy with T-shirt) and my friend. I express the wish that every reader of Cerebus sent you a photo of himself

Merci a tous.

(Of course they'll not so good than these works of art).

Jean-Emmanuel DuBois
9 Rue Marquis
76100 Roven
France

Not so nearly as good

★★★★★★★★★★



Dear Dave,

Recently, I was re-reading some of my old issues of *Cerebus*, including #114 (a good issue. You should promote the beginning of a novel more, but I won't get into that now). So, that night, when I went to bed, I had *Cerebus* on the brain. I had an odd dream, and now I have a problem I want you to solve.

In my dream I had just finished reading *Cerebus* #128, and I enjoyed it so much that I wrote you a letter. (one of those bullshit letters; you know, "I love *Cerebus*, I love your art, make mine Vanabeim", etc.) you hated it! You wrote me back a long letter about how you hated me, my house, my dog and my very existence as a human being! You threatened me with several disgusting tortures, and told me to never write again.

Later on, I found that my friend Peter Wallace (yes, my friend has the same first name as me) had written you a similar letter, and you loved it! You sent him back copies of every appearance of *Cerebus* ever! After that, you contacted every comic shop in the world and told them not to sell me *Cerebus* anymore! I got more and more frightened, then you called me on the telephone and told me that you were on the telephone and told me that you were "sending over the boys to rough me up and confiscate all my back issues."

The thugs came immediately. They broke into my house and started tearing things apart. I was scared as hell! I grabbed some clothes and all my issues, stuffed them into a bag, and climbed out the window and down to the street. I ran to the bus station and bought a ticket. I climbed on the bus and, as it rumbled off, there were the thugs running down the street after me.

For some reason, the bus stopped off in the middle of a huge forest. I warily stepped off into a clearing. The bus drove off.

I built a fire and wrapped myself in a blanket. Just as I thought I was safe, I heard a noise. It sounded like a branch being broken. I looked around and saw the thugs, standing in the moonlight, arms crossed, sunglasses on, looking very menacing. "Mr. Sim wants to have words wit youse, punk," said one. I cringed in fear. Next Gerhard stepped forward and stood in the same stance as the thugs. He stared at me. Now, Dave and my "friend" Peter Wallace walked up to the fire.

"I have just one thing to tell you, Schnitzler," said Dave as he cracked his knuckles. "After that, I'm gonna break your legs. One thing. And don't

you ever forget it. That one thing is". Then I woke up in a cold sweat.

Now Dave, I don't want you to think I'm nuts or something. I mean, I don't go around dreaming about you all the time. But since that night, I've been wondering. I can't sleep. I can't eat. Please, tell me, what were you going to say, Dave? What? What?! WHAT?!

Yours anxiously,

Peter Schnitzler
7209 N. Layman Ave.
Indpls., In.
46250

Eggs don't bounce.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

DAMN!!!!

I thought that *Cerebus* was going to bugger off for the next 21 issues. I thought that the new novel would centre on Jaka and Jaka alone, with no aardvarks, no Tarim, no prophecies, and no left over plotlines from Church & State. Damn-itall, why did he have to appear? You'd think the bloody comic was just about him or something?

Can't you just say it was all a dream? Something Jaka dreamt, after her miscarriage? YEAH! It was a dream, and . . . and . . . and *Cerebus* is . . . Dead . . . no . . . STUCK IN A SWOON OF SELF PITY!!!!!!

Yeah, and Jaka is having this dream because of her unresolved feelings for *Cerebus*, which is what indirectly caused the miscarriage in the first place.

There ya go, Dave ole chum, just a dream, so you can erase that little bugger and get back to Jaka. Where you were going to put *Cerebus*, just draw in a flowerpot or spittoon or something.

I guess I'm a little anti-aardvark (wasn't that a character in *CRISIS*?) because I was wearing my *Cerebus* shirt the other night when I got hit by a car, and had to explain who he was to a bored looking nurse when I was in emergency.

"Ooooh, so he's the Pope, is he? Sounds kinda weird to me."

"Yeah, he's drawn by a guy up in Kitchener"

"Ooooh, I have a sister up in Kitchener, I'll have to ask her about it."

Get him out, Dave.

Please.

Merry Christmas, and see ya in 89.

Twist
8-290 Springbank
Helltown, Ontario

P.S. Is this an Inferno tie in?

You should've seen the look on the little bastard's face when he came in

for the rehearsal for 120 and all his script said was "hit your mark and when Jaka asks you if you've seen Rick you say 'Nay.'"

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Regarding Anthony Gallagher's letter:

I give you some credit for not giving this letter an answer of more dismissal. I should give you more credit now than I did when you showed up for the Pelican in San Jose with all my "San Jose must have better drugs than San Francisco" jokes. Dear sir you has my respect. In fact, I found your answer to have some irony surrounding it, considering the "Can I just do it 'til I need glasses?" vein, as you replied to the semi-serious discussion of self-abuse with "Poor Cecil is a man with a vision and the rest of the world is wearing bifocals."

This is a tough subject to breach. As (even) Lenny Bruce once said, when a court accused him of making masturbatory pantomime in front of an audience, "I wouldn't do that. Chicks don't dig it." In fact, although I admire Cecil and The Wankers movement, I have to advocate my position anonymously.

During the past political race, the subject of abortion was raised in a few conversations I had. In one, a woman offered that all males should be castrated until the age of at least eighteen as an alternative to abortion. This reminded me somewhat of a discussion I had with a friend's sister when I was fourteen. She suggested that all males should stick the pages of a Playboy subscription together from twelve to eighteen. This would certainly and radically reduce the number of teenage pregnancies. And, so far there has been no documented cases of AIDS being spread through magazines or video screens.

In a related instance, a San Francisco morning disc jockey (at a station that remains in the Bay Area top-ten) said something one day that blew my mind off its hinges 'cause it made so much goddamn sense. What he said, now listen up, Dave, was this:

"In all cases of rape, psychologists have found a connection between each and every rapist . . ."

Can you guess what the connection was, Dave?

"... they didn't masturbate."

Now, this is totally undocumented by myself Hearsay, Third or Fourth party. But I'll be dipped in shit if it doesn't make so much sense it's astounding

I wasn't going to open this subject with any women I knew personally or wanted to, but when I told a fairly liberal friend's wife, she told me that Debbie Reynolds had suggested something of the same notion in her autobiography. (Don't ask me what the context was she wrote that, but it certainly does beg to be answered — so consider that a book plug for Debbie.)

A day before Ted Bundy's execution he confessed the root of his crimes were his strict upbringing and an obsession with pornography. Do you have to ask if he masturbated? I bet if it was investigated, you'd find out that he didn't. I suspect that masturbation would lead a person to know the difference between reality and fantasy, when reality is more comforting and warm than fantasy.

Hopefully, if Cecil Murgatroyd is smart, he won't stand so strongly against regular intercourse, but advocate masturbation for the greater enjoyment of having company.

Forgive my anonymity, but this subject is apparently more offensive than homosexuality, probably because women's hairdressers are more apt to advocate one than the other.

These days coming out against masturbation is more stupid and dangerous than the Pope going to Bombay and denouncing birth control. I think it's time we all stopped beating around the bush and got to the meat of the matter.

Anonymously yours,

Anon.

Some Hon. Members: Hear hear, hear hear.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave & Gerhard,

It is good to see the use of the fairy tale within JAKA'S STORY.

Illuminated letters combine with illustration & text to produce some very effective images, and make one feel they themselves are in the Wonderland.

As usual the rendering & colouring are excellent. And while Cerebus continues to be his wonderful moody self, intricate sub-plots abound.

What more could anyone ask for?

Sincerely,,

T. Fobbs
Brighton
England.

Indeed.

★★★★★★★★★★

Yo Dave,

I was going to let Church & State digest a little, and then send you my reactions to it. But now C&S is standing just fine on its own merits, and I've come across something much more fascinating. I've discovered the third aardvark! Yup Dave, your secret has been blown by a bunch of ancient Peruvians. (Does that make it an ante-peruvian secret? Are puns that obscure allowed in comics?)

Check the enclosed page from "Machu Picchu" (a volume in Newsweek's "Wonders of Man" Series). In a chapter called Peru Before The Incas we find this wonderful complex image (from 800 BC or so) of a short character wearing an intricate 6-tier headdress. This is a picture worthy of Gerhard's magic pen, only some Peruvian stone-sculptors beat him to it.

Now it gets interesting. Look at the face underneath that headdress. Kinda familiar eh? Whose baleful scowl is that in those unseparated (?) eyes? Whose snout is that behind the mouth-strap?

An earth-pig born roamed ancient Peru, Dave. Fess up! Looks like either Cerebus gets around more widely than you have yet hinted to us, or the third aardvark is hanging out in the ancient Andes. I can see it: his Peruvian Perfection! Never thought anybody'd catch on, did you...

You said once that you and Ger (bless his magic pen!) had paid special attention to the set layout in Jaka's Story. The result is a treat. After #116 it hit me that there was already enough internal evidence for me to get an almost complete layout of Jaka's flat. Putting the pieces together was as much fun as a good jigsaw puzzle. The woodbox by the stove got to seeming like a leit-motif. The mirror on the door of the washroom... the bedroom window with the rising sunlight... lovely.

The only thing you seem consistently sloppy (or just loose?) about is the Sun. Sometimes it seems to rise and set on the same side of the mountain. Sometimes it seems to rise or set in the North or South. (Velikovsky would have love you!) As a result I still haven't figured out which side of the mountain Most Holy's Hotel was on. (The East I think, but I can't support it from the evidence.) Wanna tell me?

This fast-and-loose approach to ol' Sol is only noticeable*because all of your other details are so meticulous. Picky picky...

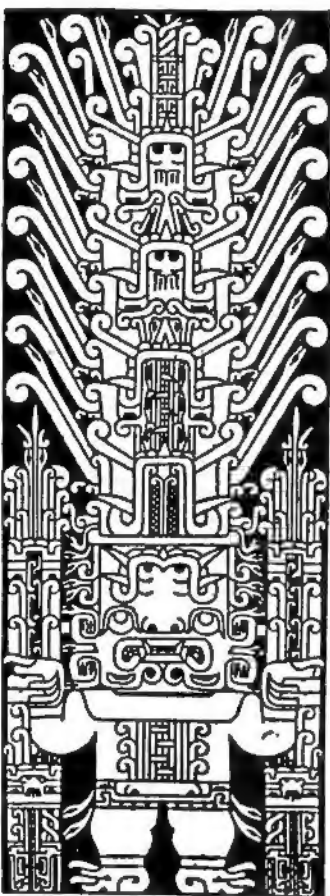
Speaking of putting pieces together... no dancing... no women in taverns... it's your ass if you were the last pope. Hmm... Holy Foreshadowing, Dave!

-yrs,

Jeff Bulf
Cupertino, CA

You really threw Gerhard for a loop by noticing the wood-box. He was sure nobody noticed the wood-box. Now he's all self-conscious.

Through Church & State, the gravitational pull of issues 107-111 kept throwing off my Sun sense. I felt trapped between Artemis and Apollo. That's as close as I can get to an explanation. (The ancient Cerebus is around here somewhere.)



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Rose and Gerhard, a beach
somewhere in Cuba.



HOWEVER: WHAT had been a Decision in the morning gloom, curtains drawn, warmly nestled beneath several layers of quilting, could scarcely be described as Speculation by Bath's end. Dressing time concluded with the erosion of both Decision and Speculation till naught was left but the slimmest and most fragile of Notions.

It fared badly amid the bustle and clutter of Breakfast.

Standing in place, her cheek pressed against the back of her hand; her hand pressed against the ancient wood of the Locked Door, Jaka felt the remains of that Notion dwindle and lose substance within her.

Until all that remained (or, perhaps, *didn't*) was a glimmer of Uncertainty.